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As soon as the law was formulated, and precisely as the result of being formulated, the law began to lose its force; and now we face a common complaint that population refuses to press upon subsistence. Again, it seems clear that emphasis upon the law of diminishing returns has been the chiefly important factor in checking, at least, the rate of diminution. And therefore when we are confronted with an economic determinism which tells us that human life and social conditions are under the absolute dominion of economic law, it will be sufficient to point to the economist who reveals the law, and who by his organized investigation of economic fact enables us more or less to know where we stand with relation to one another. Through his revelation of law and of fact, it is precisely he who plays the leading part in transforming the world of economic determinism into a world of moral obligation.

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THE METHOD OF ABSOLUTE POSIT

A UNIVERSE of pure reason loses none of its fascination for daring minds as the ages of philosophy roll by. Appalled by nothing short of contradiction, Professor Cassius J. Keyser has written a book on *The Human Worth of Rigorous Thinking* which is another brief for absolute abstraction. Unlike briefs in general it is interesting reading: illuminating, stimulating, delightful. Is it also convincing, or more nearly convincing than countless previous attempts to think reality without content of sense perception?

The goal of Professor Keyser's thinking is a conceptual universe without concrete alloy, and harmonious throughout. Its attributes are finite and infinite. Its amplitudes are space and hyper-space. Professor Keyser is persuaded that this complex is intellectually possible, as involving no inherent contradiction. Not all his readers can share his confidence.

His account of space *n*-dimensional in respect of independent variables other than points, but not more than three-dimensional in respect of points, is a thing perfect of its kind: it is clear. But the achievement of mere clarity in a domain so restricted by no means satisfies Professor Keyser. An *n*-dimensional space that, after all, is only complex space, resolvable into our commonsensible four point space, is for him wholly inadequate. Its independent variables turn out to be only categorical repetends, as interminable as the string of threes that you get when you divide one hundred by three. A hyper-space deserving to be so called must be more than four point space in a looking-glass, or, if a dynamic figure be preferred, it must be more than familiar space chasing its tail around a sphere or tying itself in knots. It must lie ''outside'' the rover's bounds of ''fore'' and ''aft,'' ''starboard'' and ''port,'' ''aloft'' and ''below.''

It can not be discovered, and in propriety it should not be if it could be, because discovery rests under suspicion, as possibly sprung from a consorting of Thought with Imagination. It must be created, and this is a way to create it; not the only way, Professor Keyser says, but the one of his choice (p. 117).

Posit two points and grant that these determine a line. It is space of one dimension. Outside of the line posit a point and suppose lines from it to all points of the given line. The plane so constituted is space of two dimensions. Outside of the plane posit a point and suppose lines from it to all points in the given plane. The solid so constituted is space of three dimenisons. By this time you have your cue: ''Boldly pursue the opened course.'' ''Outside the space last generated'' posit a point and suppose it ''joined by lines to all the points of the given space.'' You create hyper-space of five point reference, and the process ''obviously admits of endless repetition.''

Obviously; and if you spend your life in repeating it, attempting nothing else, no rational intelligence purged of sense can prove that your conduct is absurd. But Professor Keyser started out to do something else, and to do it in fact he must, without logical collisions, get his hyper-spaces into a conceptual universe!

Turn then to page 89. In italics Blaise Pascal's ''brilliant *mot*'' with a change or two of wording, but ''without change of meaning'' beams upon you: ''Space is an infinite sphere whose center is everywhere and whose surface is nowhere.'' Professor Keyser is not aware, he says, that this ''splendid literary gem,'' has been ''regarded seriously as a scientific thesis.'' ''It may, however,'' he contends, ''be so regarded,'' and he undertakes to show ''that this exquisite saying of Pascal expresses with mathematical precision the firm, albeit unconscious, conviction of the normally educated mind respecting the size and shape of the space of our universe.'' There is nothing doubtful about this language. ''Mathematical precision'' is a phrase of rigorous meaning. ''Outside'' is a word of rigorous logical meaning, of rigorous geometrical meaning. Where then, speaking (and thinking) rigorously, do we posit a point outside of an infinite sphere of four point space which has its center everywhere and its surface nowhere? ''Obviously,'' thinking (and speaking) rigorously, *nowhere!*

Here, then, we arrive at an interesting bit of conceptual or logical, if not transcendental, truth. Infinite space of four point reference and hyper-space of more than four point reference can not coexist in the same rational universe. Their relationship is not a mere difficulty for imagination; it is a contradiction for conception. The fifth independent point of reference must be posited not only outside of four point space: it must be posited outside of pure reason.

Let us, however, not shrink from that possibility. The creators of hyper-space have been daring, but not daring enough. Arrived at Reason's ultimate *d* on the tangent of Aleph null, they have gasped and faltered. Knowing that from hyper-space no echo has fallen upon ears of sense and that into its depths the eye of imagination has not seen, they should boldly have faced the possibility that its dimensionality has not veritably been conceived by intellect. Then should the truth have made them free. Then should they have bethought themselves, with Euclid and Pascal, that a fourth independent point of space reference is a mathematical limit of relativity, beyond which one leaps off his tangent into the Absolute. A fifth independent point of space reference is Absolute Posit, not relative posit like each of the first four points. It is the creation not of Reason (the relation maker), but of that Pure Spirit which is the Will to Create, emancipated at last from conceptual necessity as from bondage to sense.

For those who are so free—so absolutely free—and can endlessly create by posit, the hyper-spaces are surely not too ample. Those of us who know in our hearts that we are not absolutely free, and that we never shall master the Method of Absolute Posit, must live as best we can within that infinite sphere which has its center everywhere and nowhere its surface—that is to say, within the modest realm of Science—the Universe of Relative Reality. In this realm Perception and Conception dwell in amity, creating by cooperation that modicum of knowledge whose credentials of verification are the joint and several attests of Perception and Conception, "checking up"' each other. In this realm our freedom is limited; we are under obligations and necessities; yet it is a goodly realm, and pleasant, if we are law abiding.

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